

**City of Tacoma**  
**2004 Comprehensive Plan Update**  
**Public Participation Program**  
**November 2003**

**What is this document?**

This document provides the procedures for engaging citizens in the City of Tacoma's efforts to update the comprehensive plan and development regulations by December 1, 2004, as mandated by the State Growth Management Act (GMA).

**What is the Comprehensive Plan Update?**

GMA requires that the City review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive land use plan and development regulations to ensure that the plan and regulations continue to comply with the requirements of GMA. The first review and revision shall be completed on or before December 1, 2004, and every seven years thereafter. This particular effort in 2004 is called the Comprehensive Plan Update.

The review and evaluation shall include, but is not limited to, consideration of regulations for critical areas such as wetlands, streams and habitat areas, and an analysis of the population allocated to the City from the most recent ten-year population forecast by the State Office of Financial Management. The City's plan must be based on the allocated population growth for the next ten years.

The 2004 Update is partially funded with State funds made available through the State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, which is a project financier.

**Update vs. Amendment**

"Update" and "amendment" are two distinguished terms under GMA. "Update" means to review and revise, if needed, the comprehensive plan and development regulations for compliance with GMA at least once every seven years. "Amendment" generally refers to the annual changes to the comprehensive plan and development regulations. Tacoma has been conducting such amendments on an annual basis for the past decade.

For 2004, the City intends to combine the Comprehensive Plan Update and the annual amendment into one process. In other words, as the Update proceeds, the City will continue to consider applications requesting changes or revisions to the comprehensive plan and development regulations. All such applications must be submitted to the City by March 31, 2004, in order to be considered in 2004.

This deadline of March 31, however, will be changed to December 31, starting with the 2005 amendment cycle, i.e., applications to be considered in 2005 must be submitted to the City by December 31, 2004.

## What will be reviewed?

The following mandatory elements of the comprehensive plan and the development regulations will be reviewed under the Comprehensive Plan Update:

1. Generalized Land Use Plan
2. Housing Plan
3. Capital Facilities Plan and Program
4. Utilities Plan
5. Transportation Plan and Program
6. Critical Areas Preservation Regulations
7. Other development regulations

## What are the end results?

The Comprehensive Plan Update will result in (1) an updated comprehensive plan containing at minimum the five GMA-mandated elements, i.e., land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities and transportation, and (2) revised development regulations, including the Critical Areas Preservation Regulations.

The end results are expected to achieve the following objectives:

- Update policies and information in a comprehensive manner to comply with GMA requirements and optimize consistency among relevant plans and regulations.
- Consolidate and streamline the structure and organization of the comprehensive plan and make it user-friendly and easier to maintain and administer.
- Improve the implementation of the comprehensive plan by clarifying and strengthening the linkages between plans and regulations.

## What is the timeline?

The Comprehensive Plan Update will be conducted following the typical procedure through which the Tacoma Planning Commission conducts its review of annual amendments to the comprehensive plan and development regulations. The following table depicts the main tasks and the general timeline for the 2004 Update.

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
September – October 2003	Identify elements to be reviewed
September – December 2003	Conduct reviews and necessary analyses, and compile a report that identifies the scope of potential revisions
January – March 2004	Receive public feedback on the scope of potential revisions
January – March 2004	Receive applications for amendments to the comprehensive plan and development regulations
January – August 2004	Prepare draft revisions to the comprehensive plan and development regulations

November 2003 – November 2004	Prepare written communications about the 2004 Update throughout the process via public notices, e-mails, website, newsletters, etc.
January – June 2004	Conduct community meetings (e.g., Neighborhood Councils meetings, information meetings, focus groups, and workshops)
January – October 2004	Facilitate public review and Planning Commission's recommendation of draft revisions
September – November 2004	Facilitate City Council's review and adoption of revisions

## **How can citizens get involved?**

Citizens are encouraged to actively participate in the project by attending meetings of the Planning Commission and the City Council, working with their respective Neighborhood Councils to discuss issues and formulate recommendations as appropriate, visiting the City's website, or contacting planning staff.

### Planning Commission:

The Planning Commission is designated by the Tacoma Municipal Code as the responsible citizen panel for advising the City Council on comprehensive plan and land use issues. Accordingly, the Commission will be the primary source of public involvement in guiding the 2004 Update. The Growth Management Division of the Tacoma Economic Development Department provides staff support to the Commission. All Commission meetings are open to the public and interested community members are welcome to attend.

### Public Hearings:

Public hearings will be conducted by the Planning Commission and City Council. This will include opportunities for written comments.

### Public Meetings:

In addition to the Planning Commission's meetings and hearings, general public meetings may be held at key project milestones for the public to provide feedback and suggestions. Focus groups may be conducted, if needed, to accommodate certain community interests in selected elements of the comprehensive plan. Staff will also pursue outreach efforts with the Neighborhood Councils, business district associations, and other community groups and interested parties.

### Web Page:

The Tacoma Economic Development Department maintains a web page on comprehensive planning ([www.cityoftacoma.org/54CompPlan](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/54CompPlan)), which is an effective means for the public to follow the 2004 Update and provide comments as desired. The web page also provides information on the Planning Commission ([www.cityoftacoma.org/54CompPlan/PCWelcome.htm](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/54CompPlan/PCWelcome.htm)), including agendas and minutes of meetings.

## **What is the Comprehensive Plan?**

Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan is the official statement adopted by the City Council setting forth goals and policies to protect the health, welfare, safety and quality of life of Tacoma's residents.

The plan expresses a long-range vision of how citizens want their community to look and function in the future. The plan helps to focus, coordinate and direct the many diverse activities of City departments by providing a comprehensive and common vision.

The Comprehensive Plan was first adopted in 1975. It went through a major update in 1993 to fulfill the requirements of the State Growth Management Act, and has been subsequently amended on an annual basis to maintain the consistency with the State law.

The Comprehensive Plan contains five primary elements mandated by the State law, i.e., land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities and transportation. The Comprehensive Plan also contains general elements that address citywide issues, subarea elements that focus on a neighborhood or a specialized geographic area, as well as implementation programs that identify actions and projects to carry out the goals and policies.

## **What are development regulations?**

Development regulations are controls placed on the development and use of land. They include zoning regulations, which manage the location and intensity of uses, and critical areas regulations, which protect wetlands, streams, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitats, frequently flooded areas, and geological hazards. Development regulations are a measure to carry out the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Who to contact for more information?**

For more information, please contact the following staff at the Tacoma Economic Development Department:

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